

and his two children, Candace and Bill, are as proud as I am of his many accomplishments and his dedication to his profession.

AMERICA'S LOOMING LONG-TERM CARE CRISIS

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, while I was back home in Indiana for the recent congressional recess, I came across an excellent op-ed in the Indianapolis Star written by the CEO of Consecro Inc—one of our Nation's premier insurance, annuity and financial security firms—C. James Prieur. The topic of this op-ed was a subject that I have been deeply concerned about for some time, namely, the question of long-term health care. Not since the days of Hillarycare back in the early 1990s has the issue of health care been raised to such prominence in political and civic debates all across the country. However, one aspect of health care that I believe is still not garnering the kind of attention it should is long-term care, LTC, insurance.

Back in December 2006, the AARP released a shocking survey, which found that a full 59 percent of American adults age 45 and older overestimate Medicare coverage for long-term care. Other studies have shown similar results. Taken together, the implication is clear; far too many Americans do not have a clear perception of long-term care costs or to what extent long-term care is covered by public programs. For example, Medicare pays for care delivered in skilled nursing facilities to patients who require longer term medical treatment, but Medicare does not pay for custodial care needed to assist frail and disabled beneficiaries with eating, bathing and other activities of daily living. Medicaid only covers those types of services if you are impoverished or become impoverished, and it provides far fewer quality care choices than are offered through typical long-term care insurance plans.

With the impending retirement of roughly 76 million baby boomers in the next 10 to 20 years, and the average cost of a private room in a nursing home running about \$75,000 a year, in current dollars, we are facing a potential long-term care train wreck. Fortunately, the solution is already in place, and it is not a Government-run insurance program; it is the private insurance industry. As Mr. Prieur clearly says in his op-ed, and I agree with him, long-term care insurance isn't for everyone. But, millions of Americans have already put their trust in LTC insurance, and when 97 percent of long-term care claims submitted to private insurers are being paid out—which is the finding of a survey of the leading LTC insurers done by America's health insurance plans—the facts seem to show that this trust is well placed.

I urge my colleagues to read this op-ed and to talk to your constituents about Medicare and long-term care issues. And I urge my colleagues to come together to enact simple, commonsense changes in Federal policy that can help Americans take an important step towards preparing for their long-term care and retirement security needs. One of the easiest

things we could do is to allow long-term care insurance to be offered among employer-sponsored cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements, FSAs. Currently, benefits such as medical insurance, disability income, life insurance, and a variety of other voluntary benefits are cafeteria style but long-term care insurance is not. Moreover, long-term care insurance cannot be purchased using FSA dollars. That simply makes no sense.

[From the Indianapolis Star, Dec. 31, 2007]

LET'S WORK TO AVOID LONG-TERM CARE CRISIS

(By C. James Prieur)

Here's a question: What percentage of the long-term care claims submitted to private insurance companies were paid in 2006? 10 percent? 25 percent? 50 percent? The actual answer—according to a survey of the leading LTC insurers by America's Health Insurance Plans—is 97 percent. If that high percentage surprises you, it may be because a small number of problem LTC insurance cases have been grabbing the headlines.

Public attention is focusing as never before on the important issue of how Americans will pay for their long-term care needs. Soaring health care costs, the looming retirement of millions of baby boomers, and the fear that Medicare and Medicaid will be dangerously strained are behind this concern. Unfortunately, misleading media accounts may be driving away the very people who would benefit most from LTC insurance.

Far-sighted leaders in Congress who are pushing to broaden the number of Americans who have LTC insurance are doing so for good reason. The cost for providing long-term care will be a major, potentially crippling expense for many households. Contrary to what many think, government programs will pay only part of the tab. Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa noted recently that “preparing for long-term care needs can make a big difference in both the quality of life for individuals and the solvency of Medicaid.” How the success of these products and their new variations will affect public programs is a serious issue. Many seniors mistakenly believe their LTC costs will be covered by Medicare. In fact, Medicare does not cover home health care, nursing home care or the type of care one may need for a severe cognitive impairment like Alzheimer's disease.

This means that most seniors will have to bear a meaningful share of their own long-term care costs, and that's where private LTC insurers enter the picture. It is our mission to provide seniors with the assurance that their long-term care needs will be covered and their legacy will be preserved.

Millions of Americans have put their trust in LTC insurance, and the facts show that this trust is well placed. Overwhelmingly, insurers are meeting their obligations. Across the country in 2005 (the most recent full-year data available), the LTC industry paid more than \$3 billion of claims.

LTC insurance isn't for everyone. If you are among the wealthiest of Americans, you might be able to afford to pay your own LTC expenses. If you have a very low income or few assets, Medicaid may help you. If you fall somewhere in between, LTC insurance may be the smart choice to relieve the financial strain on your family and help you protect assets.

LTC insurance is getting more expensive. Many LTC insurers today are asking state insurance departments for authority to raise their LTC insurance rates. Policyholder premiums are based on several factors that have changed significantly over time, and in ways that few anticipated.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, I missed a vote.

I would have voted as follows: rollcall vote No. 3: “yea,” passage of H. Res. 912 under suspension of the rules, condemning the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and reaffirming the commitment of the United States to assist the people of Pakistan in combating terrorist activity and promoting a free and democratic Pakistan.

RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2008

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Catholic Schools Week 2008.

From January 27 to February 2, 2008 nearly 2.4 million students who attend the Nation's 7,800 elementary, middle and secondary Catholic schools will celebrate Catholic Schools Week.

I laud the efforts of faculty and parents who provide our Nation's children with an excellent education focused on faith and values.

The 2008 theme, “Catholic Schools Light the Way” focuses on the leadership that Catholic Schools provide to our Nation by producing graduates who “light the way to a brighter future for all humankind.”

The Archdiocese of St. Louis has a long-standing tradition of leadership. I thank the Archdiocese for their commitment to enriching the lives of children.

Catholic Schools Week is a testament to the outstanding work by the Archdioceses across the country.

COMMEMORATING THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MR. HRANT DINK

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to solemnly remember the life of journalist and activist, Hrant Dink,

On January 19th, 2007, Mr. Dink was gunned down by a Turkish ultra-nationalist outside his newspaper office in Istanbul, Turkey.

Hrant Dink was a man who called for tolerance, peaceful dialogue and greater civil rights for all Turkish citizens. He was a fierce defender of freedom and believed all people have equal rights under the law. He believed that everyone should have the right to know the truth about their nation's past, however dark that past was.

Hrant Dink had been prosecuted by the Turkish government under penal code 301—a